



**NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE  
WESTERN REGION  
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH**



**OCTOBER 8, 2003**

**REGIONAL DIRECTOR**

**NOAA Announces Bronze Medal Winners:** The 2003 NOAA/NWS Bronze Medal winners have been announced, and several WR individuals and groups will receive the honor. The ceremony is scheduled for Friday, October 24, 2003, at the University of Maryland Inn and Conference Center in Adelphi, Maryland. Congratulations to the following recipients:

***WFO Glasgow*** --- Glasgow staff will be recognized for advanced, accurate warnings provided to the citizens of northeast Montana during two significant flash flooding events which resulted in extensive property damage.

***Vernon Preston, Kenneth Holmes, Carl Weinbrecht*** --- Vern (WCM, Pocatello), Ken (WCM, Spokane) and Carl (retired WCM, Boise) will be recognized for collaborative efforts to successfully make Idaho the National Weather Service's leading StormReady state in both 2001 and 2002. As a team, they helped get 102 locations certified.

***Mark Mathewson, Tom LeFebvre, Tracy Hansen, Michael Romberg*** --- Mark, Tom, Tracy, and Michael, of the Forecast Systems Laboratory in Boulder, Colorado, will be recognized for leadership in creating software to allow all Weather Service offices to generate high-resolution, digital, and graphical forecasts in real-time operations.

***Michelle Schmidt*** --- HCSD Deputy Chief Michelle Schmidt is a member of a group that will be recognized for standardization of the Hydrologic Forecast System database across the entire National Weather Service.

***NWS Incident Meteorologists*** --- IMETS in WR and across the nation will be recognized for the meteorological support they provided, which helped ensure the safety of nearly 33,000 firefighters during the 2002 wildfire season.

**DEPUTY REGIONAL DIRECTOR**

**WFOs/RFCs Participate in Outreach Activities:** Many NWS Forecast Offices, as well as our River Forecast Centers participated in outreach activities over the past few weeks. These activities provide an opportunity for staff to become more ingrained with their community and help explain our mission. Congratulations to those who planned and participated in these events:

**WFO Sacramento Participates in "Family Program":** WFO Sacramento staff members spent several hours at a local science center on September 20 as part of a monthly "family program" series at the center. Assistant WCM John Juskie and WCM Kathy Hoxsie presented information illustrating how small changes in local weather parameters can make large differences in the observed weather. Children were treated to hands-on weather experiments and were able to handle basic weather instruments. The NWS staff also played a new game called "Who Wants to be a Meteorologist." Members of the crowd would try to work their way up to the "million dollar prize." No one seemed to mind that the prize was an NWS pencil for all participants.



*(l to r) Flagstaff HMT Edward Milazzo prepares the weather balloon for launch during the open house. Intern Robert Bohlin (dark blue shirt) and DAPM Byron Peterson (far right) lead a discussion on the NWS Upper-air program.*

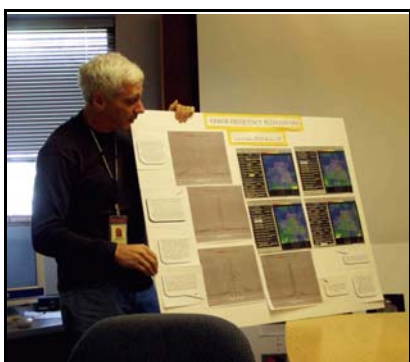
**WFO Flagstaff Holds Open House:** WFO Flagstaff held an open house on September 27 as part of the 2003 Flagstaff Festival of Science. The festival is a 10-day family event with open houses, lectures, school presentations, hikes, and excursions. The NWS opened its doors to more than 75 people and included a briefing and history of the NWS Flagstaff office, the new IFPS system, and the digital database. Visitors also toured the operations area and observed how forecasts are generated and watched the launching of a weather balloon. NWS personnel helping out with the event included MIC Brian Klimowski, WCM George Howard, SOO Mike Staudenmaier, DAPM Byron Peterson, ESA Doug Birck, Forecaster Dan LeBlanc, HMT Edward Milazzo, and Intern Robert Bohlin.

**WFO Seattle Participates in Deaf World 2003:** On September 20, WFO Seattle participated in Deaf World 2003 Conference, with more than 2,000 attendees. Held at the Seattle Center, the NWS partnered with Washington State Emergency Management and the Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. NWS staffed a booth with the state at this event, demonstrating the warning system capabilities of NOAA Weather Radio and weather radio model attachments for the deaf including the new RCA-TV with the built-in weather radio feature. Interpreters were available to help.

**Portland Hosts Water & Weather Workshop:** WFO Portland and the Northwest River Forecast Center (NWRFC) partnered to host a day long Water and Weather Workshop on September 30. The workshop was held at the Vancouver, Washington, Water Resource Education Center and was tailored for emergency and water managers as well as media. Approximately 60 people from western Washington and western Oregon attended the workshop. Several WFO and NWRFC staff members gave presentations during the workshop which ranged from Pacific Northwest weather hazards, NWS digital and graphical products, NWRFC products and services, the NWS hydrology and flood program, and myths and facts of hydrologic events. Feedback from those in attendance

was very positive. Presentations from the workshop can be found at the NWRFC website: <http://www.nwrfc.noaa.gov/presentations>.

**Montana Disaster & Emergency Conference:** The 2003 Fall Conference for the State of Montana Disaster and Emergency Services was held in Sidney, Montana, on October 7-9. The focus of the meeting was to discuss emergency response planning for the upcoming Lewis and Clark Bi-Centennial Celebration, which is expected to bring millions of tourists to Montana over the next three years. It was also an opportunity to present ideas on current NWS operating plans and communications for all-hazard situations. Three Montana NWS offices attended the conference (Glasgow, Billings and Great Falls), and presentations were made on the NDFD Digital Database and the new FX-Net fire weather forecast system. The Great Falls MIC is the Montana NWS representative on the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC), and he participated in the SERC meeting which included policies that were being recommended to the state legislature.



*Lead Forecaster, Les Colin, explains the gridded forecast verification method and verification visualization graphics he developed.*

**WFO Boise Research Day:** WFO Boise held its first ever research day on September 25, 2003. Research projects were undertaken by forecasters and HMTs throughout the year to be presented on this research day. The event was planned well in advance to occur on the date of the AWIPS OB2 installation at Boise. While WFO Pocatello provided service backup, WFO Boise staff held a 2-hour seminar, where overviews of sixteen different research projects were presented. Posters of each project were created to aid in the presentations. In appreciation of the staff's efforts, the management team provided pizza and cookies. WFO Boise staff will vote on the research project that will have the greatest operational impact on the office, and the author will be recognized with a Special Act Award. The staff is eagerly looking forward to repeating this event next year.

**NWS Offices in Nevada Participate in Amber Alert Test:** NWS Forecast Offices in Reno, Las Vegas, and Elko participated in a test of the emergency alert system in Nevada during September. The emergency alert system is used by the NWS to issue severe weather warnings. It is also used by law enforcement and safety officials to warn the public about other immediate emergencies, such as fire evacuations, hazardous materials spills, 911 service outages, and missing children. When activated, the alert triggers the rapid dissemination of information using radio and television broadcasts and programmable highway signs. Several Nevada media, including the Las Vegas Review-Journal, carried stories announcing the test. The coverage mentioned the use of NOAA Weather Radio as an All-Hazards radio.

**METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DIVISION**

**Statement of the Week:** This week's statement of the week is a segment from a Short Term Forecast written by Brian Fehn of WFO Elko. The nowcast does a nice job of explaining what is expected to occur over the next hour, rather than stating what just happened or is happening now. It also includes specific time, location, and hazard information instead of using vague terms. Great work, Brian!

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NOWLKN

SHORT TERM FORECAST  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE ELKO NV  
1225 PM PDT WED OCT 1 2003

NVZ035-012030-  
WHITE PINE COUNTY-  
INCLUDING THE CITY OF...ELY  
1225 PM PDT WED OCT 1 2003

.NOW...  
THROUGH 130 PM...A LINE OF SHOWERS AND THUNDERSTORMS WILL MOVE  
NORTHEAST AT 25 MPH ACROSS NORTHERN WHITE PINE COUNTY. THE  
STRONGEST STORMS WILL AFFECT CHERRY CREEK THROUGH 1 PM. THESE  
STORMS ARE CAPABLE OF PRODUCING CLOUD TO GROUND LIGHTNING...WIND  
GUSTS TO 40 MPH...AND BRIEF MODERATE RAINS. MOTORISTS TRAVELING  
ALONG HIGHWAY 93 SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR STRONG CROSSWINDS.

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**Tsunami Warning System Test:** On September 16, WFOs with coastal areas of responsibility, from Anchorage to San Diego, simultaneously conducted a test to determine effectiveness of the tsunami watch/warning dissemination system and the operational readiness of the WFOs to handle a tsunami event. The test was initiated with the transmission of a "test" tsunami warning bulletin from the West Coast/Alaska Tsunami Warning Center (WC/ATWC) in Palmer, Alaska. Verbal notification of the test message was made through the National Warning System (NAWAS). Upon receipt of the test message, coastal WFOs immediately prepared and broadcast a test message over NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) in their coastal broadcast areas. This NWR message also contained tone alert/Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) to activate the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and NWR receivers in the listening area.

Beginning in early summer, several months prior to this test, WCMs at coastal WFOs in Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and California began coordinating with local media, emergency management officials, and local communities to ensure that the purpose and plans for the test were well understood. Additionally, Alaska Region Headquarters set up a web site for voluntary feedback (following the test) from individuals and

agencies in the warning notification chain, as well as the general public. WCMs also worked closely with key individuals in the media and emergency management communities to obtain direct feedback on successes and problems concerning the test. To minimize the possibility for a false alarm, participating WFOs did not use actual tsunami warning codes when relaying the test message over NOAA Weather Radio. Many WFOs combined the test message with their routine weekly test messages, or used other special codes (e.g. "demonstration" product code). Several communities took advantage of the tsunami test to conduct tsunami preparedness and awareness training in their local jurisdictions.

Overall, the test was a success, with WFOs demonstrating the ability to rapidly disseminate tsunami warning messages. A few problem areas were uncovered, but all parties involved learned from this event and will make necessary corrections and improvements. Building on the results of this test, participants are planning to conduct an expanded tsunami warning test next year.

## **SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION**

**WRF to SLC Forecast Office:** The Salt Lake Forecast Office has started receiving the new WRF (Weather, Research and Forecast) model that the University of Utah is spinning up to replace their MM5. The university is running the WRF on the same dynamic core as the planned NCEP version to allow for close collaboration and development with the modellers at NCEP. Currently the University of Utah WRF is being run twice a day (00z and 12z) at a 12 km horizontal resolution out to 48 hours over a domain that covers the Western United States. Kirby Cook (WR/SSD) worked out the grid transfer procedures to AWIPS. The grids that are being sent to the Salt Lake office are available on a 12 km grid and include fields sufficient for their use in the GFE smart Initialization (temperature, wind, relative humidity and total precipitation).

**WES Training:** Two winter related WES cases are due December 1. The Winter TA-Lite for one of cases is due December 15. Please send Mark Mollner an email when the WES cases are completed and the TA-Lites.

**IFPS Methodology Workshop II (Oct 28-30):** The IFPS Methodology Workshop II will be held October 28-30 in Boulder. This is a sponsored by NWSHQ and WR. The workshop is a follow-up to the first IFPS workshop, with the emphasis on the "lessons learned" during the ORD and IOC and preparing for the upcoming winter season in the west. Each WR office will send one participant. Travel and accounting codes were sent out via email.

**Intermountain Weather Workshop (Nov 6):** The Tenth Annual Workshop on Weather Prediction in the Intermountain West will be held on Thursday, November 6, 2003, at the Desert Research Institute (DRI) in Reno, Nevada. The objectives of this annual workshop are to discuss major issues related to operational meteorology over the western United States and to foster interactions between researchers, applied meteorologists, and other professionals who rely on operational weather forecasts or data.

This year marks the first time that the workshop will be held in Reno, along the eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevada. With such a backdrop, the theme of the workshop will be "Meteorology of the Sierra Nevada". Presentations on operational meteorology issues relevant to both the western and eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevada, and other regions in the west whose weather is impacted by the Sierra Nevada, are encouraged. The workshop is being hosted by the DRI Division of Atmospheric Sciences.

Individuals interested in presenting or simply attending the workshop may register online. Go to the workshop web page at <http://www.conferences.dri.edu/WxPrediction> and click on the link for online registration. The deadline for conference registration requested is October 17. There are NO registration fees. Please register as soon as possible.

**WR Webmaster Workshop (Jan 27-29)**: The WR Webmaster Workshop dates have changed from November to January 27-29. It will be held in Reno, NV. The focus of the workshop will be upgrading to the new web farm, IFPS web page implementation, AHPS web pages, meeting NWS web policy, security, and other issues. Each office will be asked to send one participant.

## **SYSTEMS OPERATIONS DIVISION**

**Western Region AWIPS Status**: Twenty-two offices in Western Region have installed AWIPS Operational Build 2. The remaining six offices are scheduled to complete their installations before the end of October. Two offices in Western Region (WFO Glasgow and the Northwest RFC) are completing the Operational Acceptance Testing for the new AWIPS Linux workstations.

**Electronics & Facilities**: The Electronics and Facilities Branch Chief will be traveling to Kansas City, MO, to attend the EPM conference. The main topic covered will be developing the agenda for the National ESA conference which will be held in December.

Also the E & F Branch Chief will be forming a small team of WR ESAs to help develop topics for the regional breakout sessions which will be a part of the National ESA conference. Volunteers to assist would be greatly appreciated.

**Facilities**: We contracted to replace the condensing unit on the HVAC at WFO Spokane, to complete the furniture installation at WFO Great Falls, and to replace the compressor of AC unit at WSR-88D at Promontory Pt Utah. A contractor installed the Cell Watch Battery Monitoring System for the UPS at WRH. SOD will review the performance, and decide if this needs to be installed at all WFOs. We are currently drafting UPS Battery Replacement and Monitoring Maintenance Instructions. The draft should be available for field review in the mid November timeframe.

**Safety**: Thank you to ALL of WRH for completing the Web Based Safety Training course. The National Fire Safety Awareness week (October 5-11) is well underway. October is a time for us to review our fire safety procedures. In the spirit of National Fire Safety Awareness week, here are a few fire safety tips:

- Use and maintain electrical equipment properly.
- Handle hydrogen cylinders carefully.
- Identify and take precautions with flammable substances.
- Know the types and proper use of fire extinguishers in your office.
- Conduct a fire drill and review your emergency action procedures for your office.
- Become familiar with the requirements of Chapter 6 "Fire Protection" contained within EHB-15.

Lastly, here are the answers to the quiz that was given in the last staff notes:

**Safety Session: Ergonomics Quiz**

- 1) Good Ergonomics
  - a) Adapts the job to the person
- 2) Musculoskeletal disorders may result from repetitive motions or:
  - c) both a and b (forceful exertion, awkward positions or movements)
- 3) Carpal tunnel syndrome occurs when the nerve in the wrists carpal tunnel is pinched.
  - a) true
- 4) The tools and materials you use should be within a:
  - a) 20 inch reach
- 5) an ergonomic tool is lightweight, doesn't require extreme effort, and
  - b) Is easy to grip